

IN THE RELIGIOUS WORLD

What Church Folk Are Thinking About and Doing

WHEN A KING WENT DOWN.

The International Sunday School Lesson for March 19, is, "Defeat Through Drunkenness." 1 Kings 20.

(By William T. Ellis.)

Why do nations die? We now have written records of civilization extending back several thousand years. Yet not a single nation that flourished at the beginning of the Christian era, only two thousand years ago, is in existence today, if we except the Mongolian peoples of the Far East. Some of the great powers that exercised dominion over all, or a large part of the known world, have passed so completely out of the knowledge of mankind that their very existence was denied, until the spade turned up the records within recent decades. Such for example, were the Hittites, whom we now know to have been a powerful and ruling nation in the region that is now known as Siberia, northern Asia Minor and Armenia.

A long roll may be called of the great nations that have had their day of power and glory and then have ceased to be—Babylon, Assyria, Chaldea, Persia, Media, Parthia, Phoenicia, Scythia, Syria, Greece, Rome, Egypt. To consider the reasons for the decline of these powers is a profitable exercise in patriotism. For it naturally raises the question, Is our nation also to go the way of the empires of old? What elements of decay are there to be found in our national life? Certainly, as this is a government by the people, the cause of possible decay must be looked for in the moral and intellectual character of the citizens themselves.

A King Who Forgot Himself.

In those olden days, the king was all and the people were naught. History is largely a record of great rulers. The great progress that civilization has made since then has been in the direction of Democracy, or the rights of the whole people. What the king then did the entire citizenship now do. It is beyond the power of any one man to debauch any of the Western nations. But the least of the citizens may help his country on to this fate. A modern nation is no stronger than the character of its people.

So as we study today about King Benhadad, and the disaster his drunkenness helped bring upon Syria, we are to remember that in this Western world there are as many kings as there are citizens. Of Syria itself it may be worth while to recall that it was, in the time of Elijah, Ahab and Jehoshaphat, one of the great nations of Asia. It extended to the north, northeast and northwest of Palestine. Its capital was Damascus, that wonderful old city, perhaps the oldest in all the world that still lives as a great city. The country seems to have been made up of petty principalities, over which Benhadad was at this time the ruler. We still speak of a section of Asia along the Eastern shore of the Mediterranean as Syria, but there is, strictly, no such place as Syria, although all the present residents of the Holy Land call themselves Syrians. The nation is no more. A Turkish Vail at Damascus governs most of this region.

Benhadad had come up against Israel, with his thirty-two kings. He laid siege to Samaria, the city that is now but a hill of ruins and a small village. He despised his foe—which is always a tactical blunder, and, flushed with wine, made arrogant demands and boasts. Ahab was "roared to resistance, quoting, as an apt reply to Benhadad's vauntings, the saying, "Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off." A good motto, that, to have Sunday school scholars commit to memory. The message from Ahab came to Benhadad while he was carousing in the pavilion, or mat shed which they still erect in the East for special functions. Benhadad had forgotten himself, and that he had a king's business on hand. His task needed a clear head, instead of which he gave it a muddled one. His orders were hasty and boastful and inconsiderate. So the Syrians suffered a rout, and the king himself barely escaped with his life.

A Victorious Nation.

The story of Benhadad is interpolated here by the Lesson Committee out of its place, in order that it may be used as a temperance lesson, along the line indicated by the caption, "Defeat Through Drunkenness." For even the most careful and tolerant thinkers agree that the liquor question is one of the problems and menaces of our national life. There is a growing disposition to look at the subject less from the standpoint, "What shall we do with drink?" and more to regard it from the standpoint, "What will drink do with us?" It is obvious that no nation nowadays can be victorious whose people are in the power of the liquor habit.

Public sentiment upon the subject has grown by leaps and bounds. Temperance opinions used to be lightly regarded. Even yet it is despised by

those who form their opinions in clubs and saloons, and in the company of a few congenial spirits "about town," rather than from a knowledge of what the great mass of home-keeping people are thinking and saying. In the Berlin Zoological Gardens last summer I saw a dog in the same cage with two baby lions. It was a common yellow dog, but it bullied those cubs in a way that elicited the sympathy of the bystanders. I was not concerned, for one of these fine days the young lions would awaken to a realization that they are lions and that their tyrannous tormentor is only a yellow dog. Then woe betide the dog; all old scores will be paid with a vengeance. The little incident seemed to me a parable of conditions in this country with respect to the liquor power. For decades it has admittedly dominated our politics. The public it has treated with contempt and contumely. But now the public is awakening to the glorious realization that it is the lion, and that the ancient bully is, after all, only a yellow dog. And the world has of late been treated to the whole-some spectacle of seeing the cur kicked out into the street in hundreds of communities.

The New Attitude.

Speaking soberly and with carefulness—for too many of the other kind of words have been uttered upon this subject, and their ultimate effect has been hurtful—we may ask, "Is there any likelihood of this nation's coming to disaster through strong drink?" And, "What shall be the attitude of the citizen of tomorrow toward the liquor question?" On the first point it is enough to say that the whole is only equal to the sum of all of its parts. If the people lose their self-control, and become addicted to the debauching habit of strong drink, then there can be but one fate for the nation. Private morals are the ultimate determining factor in national destiny. Britain is great because there are such a large per cent. of great Britons. America is great for no other reason.

Directly bearing upon this question, is that other practical one, the attitude of the young people of today toward strong liquors. Let us start with no misconceptions or misrepresentations, which may later return and nullify all our teaching. Every drinker is not a drunkard. Thousands of admirable persons use liquor in moderation. There are vast reaches of society, cultured, Christian society at that, where wine is regularly served at the table. It even used to be considered "bad form" not to drink. So far from the use of intoxicants always causing poverty, disease and death, there are thousands of ripe and rich and healthy old men who have regularly indulged in the moderate use of intoxicants.

Admitting all this, and leaving out of the case for the moment that other vaster company of persons whose use of liquor has brought only harm to them, the pathetic parade of the drunken and defeated and weary of life, we may say in all assurance that the advantages of the use of intoxicants are far outweighed by the disadvantages and the risk. At best liquor affords merely a pleasant taste to those who like it. It is not a necessity at all. The most rabid advocate of strong drink will scarcely claim for it that it adds any years to a man's life, or any real increment to his working ability. The doctors and the life insurance companies have put that phase of the question outside of the realm of dispute. So there is no real physical or material gain in the habit of drinking.

There remains only the social aspect of the case, which has perhaps been more influential than any other in gaining recruits for what every beginner fondly calls moderate drinking. All users of strong drink are moderate drinkers at first. If men had to begin the habit at the gutter end the entire business of the manufacture of intoxicants would dry up and disappear inside of five years. The first glass is generally "the social glass." Men drink because they want to do as others do. They do not care to seem "peculiar." Their friends drink; therefore, so should they. That is the course of reasoning which causes the Arab women to tattoo their faces, and the Sudanese men to wear huge gashes in their cheeks. It has put rings in the noses of Hindu women, and pounds of metal bracelets on their ankles. There is not a bad or foolish custom in existence which has not had as its chief buttress this argument of usage.

Happily, society has grown more sensible and tolerant of recent years. A man is no longer "peculiar" because he does not drink. Somebody has given "emancipation" as the keyword of the nineteenth century. People are freer now than ever before in the world's history to follow their own tastes and principles without embarrassment. The most sensitive guest need no longer blush at refusing the wine at a host's table. There is today as good social precedence for total abstinence as there is for indulgence. Even abroad this is coming to be so, and the example of America is helping. At the home of a distinguished Briton the only comment made upon my empty glasses was, "I am told that in America every other man is a total abstainer." As for the old notion that one cannot travel abroad without drinking wine, it is simply nothing less than nonsense. I myself have traveled entirely around the world, and am at the moment in the heart of

Asia on a second trip, and I can testify that I have never been caused the slightest inconvenience by not tasting wine. Wherever wine is to be had mineral waters may be secured; or, more satisfactory yet the traveler may carry his own supply of freshly boiled water with him. Only once have I been embarrassed by my total abstinence principles, and that was when my Scotch hostess at a dinner party in China did not know the Chinese word for drinking water!

The safer, easier, cheaper, healthier and more altruistic course for a young person to follow with respect to intoxicants is that of total abstinence. Cold water causes no headaches, costs no positions, and is never followed by remorse and shame.

Seven Sentence Sermons.

Be among the brave, advancing minority, the world's hope, the invincible few—not a remnant, but a leadership—keeping in the van of thought, bearing and daring for what you believe to be the truth and right.—Learned.

Follow light and do the right, for man can half control his doom.—Tennyson.

Whole-hearted, striving and wrestling with difficulty; laying hold with firm grip and resolution, and toiling today, tomorrow and the next, until the task is done—this the creed of forward, ever forward, and the bigger work the greater the joy in doing it.—Henry M. Stanley.

Consecration is going out into the world, where God Almighty is, and using every power for His glory.—Henry Ward Beecher.

Grant to thy ministering servants such humility that it may be safe for them to be successful.—Newman Smythe.

Nothing of our life paths we know, Whither they lead us, why we go: Yet who's forlorn? He who watered the furrow can ripen the corn.

—Dinah Muloch Craig.

The so-called passive virtues either are not virtues or are not passive—humility, patience, self-denial and the forgiveness of injuries are battles and victories.—Hitchcock.

RIENZI: THE LAST OF THE TRIBUNES

(Continued from page fifteen.)

nel house and showed him a body wrapped in a mantle, which he only too well remembered to have seen worn by Irene. He believed her dead and departed sorrowing. The mantle had been dropped in the street by Irene and picked up by a woman, who had subsequently died of the plague, and of that mantle they had made her winding sheet. Meantime, Irene, having returned to the place where she had left Adrian, and found him gone, supposed he had died in her absence and his body carried away by the bacchino. She was persuaded then to leave the city, and soon after rejoined her brother.

At Avignon, Rienzi, having been acquitted at his trial, was sent again by the Pope to attempt once more the reclamation of Rome. With Rienzi went the Cardinal Albornoz. The better elements of all Italy rose at their coming and again Cola di Rienzi entered the Eternal City in triumph amid the acclamations of that populace, which was, in a little while, to destroy him. Adrian was in Rome when Cola entered the city. Riding by the side of the Tribune he saw a vision—the girl whom he believed dead. So once more the lovers were united, and, casting all other considerations aside, Adrian became reconciled to Cola.

Brief was the second reign of Rienzi. Walter de Montreal conspired against him. But he had placed Angelo Vasselli in the service of De Montreal, and Angelo betrayed the captain of freelances into Rienzi's hands, who put him to death. Soon after old Dame Ursula dying in a Roman convent, sent for Angelo, and revealed to him that Walter de Montreal was his father. Angelo was filled with grief at what he had done, and determined revenge upon the Tribune. With a mad infatuation Rienzi summoned the two German Kings, then contending for the imperial crown, to come to Rome and have their cause decided by the Romans. Only from the people of Rome, he declared, could an emperor of the Holy Roman Empire receive his crown. It was his last act of folly. The imperial troops and the barons came against Rome. The Pontiff deserted his cause, and he was excommunicated. The people rose against him, and Angelo betrayed him to the mob. The mob fired the palace and stabbed Rienzi to death at the foot of the great staircase. Nina, refusing to desert her husband, perished in the flames of the burning palace.

From amid the strife and terror Adrian bore away the fainting and half-conscious Irene to a place of safety outside of the city. In Adrian's northern castle they were married, and there they spent years of peace after those years of doubt and storm.

ANCIENT HISTORY VERY WELL TOLD

(Continued from page thirteen.)

from the bleachers when he reached out after one. But Jim had an off-day that day on his batting he only got three home runs in the two games and stood responsible for four of the five runs that the old patriots got that day. That's where Jim was in those days. He's a manager in the Sally League now.

"Another one of the youngsters on that aggregation was George Suggs, a product of Kinston and Oak Ridge. George gave promise of some major league twirling; he went to Memphis later, in the Southern League, and then to Detroit in the American and was making good up there until the girls began to say that George was 'just too cute for anything,' and I suppose George got to believing the 'con' himself and Hughey Jennings called him. Told him 'nix on the skirts,' but George just couldn't break away from the Ten-Cent store and Jennings, as Grantland Rice says, tied a can to him about the size of Lookout Mountain. Clark Griffith picked him up and now he is some punkins with the Cincinnati Reds.

"Then there was Tony Walters, called in those days 'The Southpaw Boy Wonder.' Tony got as high as class A and came back down last year and the year before to the Carolina Association and was away above the average, but he too is doomed to be a has-been in the baseball hall of fame. Tony finishes his course in dentistry in a Baltimore college next spring and he says he will spend the balance of his days looking down in the mouth. (Joke.)

"These are three of the ones of the old days of Brandt and Kelly.

"Baseball lagged a season or two and then when North Carolina was called on to participate again in organized baseball, Greensboro was in the running and Brandt was there to do the running again. They entered with a vim into the Virginia Carolina League, but that league was shortlived and again we had a season off. When the present Carolina Association was formed Brandt was among the headliners and this time he was the 'man behind' at Greensboro. He dug up Pop McKeivitt, and for two seasons the rag hung over the patriot's camp. Brandt then announced that he must sever his connection with the game and be an innocent bystander. He severed and Greensboro severed herself with the pennant-winning streak at one and the same time. The team got 'wobbly' toward the last of the season and again the demand came for Brandt. Brandt came clean and took her over and now he says 'Look out!' He's started already and there isn't any telling where he'll stop. He thought toward the first of January that he had signed Otis Stocksdale for manager, but he missed his connection and Lynchburg of the Virginia League landed Stock. Brandt tried to hold Stocksdale to a contract that he thought he had, but the National Association officials decided against him.

"The magnate got busy and purchased Frank Doyle from the Roanoke team in the Virginia League of last year, and Doyle will guide the Patriots to victory or to death in the coming season.

"New, young blood," said Mr. Brandt in a conversation recently, "is to be the stunt this season with us. I have passed out releases already to Busse, Walters, Hicks and Hammersley of last year's team, and I'm not saying anything about who the youngsters will be this season. But just tell them we'll be there when the gong rings in the spring."

TO REBUILD VILLAGE.

The Powder Company Promises to Pay All Damages in Recent Explosion in Wisconsin.

(By the Associated Press.)

Kenosha, Wis., March 11—The Dupont Powder Company officers, and directors, after an all-day meeting in the ruins of their plant at Pleasant Prairie, tonight promised to rebuild the village and to pay every cent of actual loss sustained by any person as a result of the explosion of Thursday night. The promise was made by J. P. Laffey, of Wilmington, Del., general counsel for the company.

Three more deaths caused indirectly by the explosion were reported almost coincidentally with the announcement by the company.

The plan to rebuild the plant will be resisted by the residents of Kenosha county.

STREET CAR STRIKE.

Agreement is Reached Whereby the Trouble is Ended.

(By the Associated Press.)

Oklahoma City, Okla., March 11—At a conference of city officials, officials of the street railway company, and an attorney for the labor interests held this afternoon, an agreement on a settlement of the street railway strike was reached. Running of the cars will be resumed on Monday, when they will have been idle a week.